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SUBJECT: DAS SHEAR DISCUSSES AF/PAK WITH MFA

Classified By: Economic Minister Counselor William Weinstein for reasons 1.4 (B/D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: China welcomes a "constructive" U.S. role in South Asia as well as continued dialogue and coordination with the United States regarding South Asia, an MFA official told DAS Shear December 10. Responding to DAS Shear's suggestion of areas for possible U.S.-PRC cooperation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the MFA official stressed China's bilateral channels of assistance but expressed willingness to study more detailed U.S. proposals on agriculture, counternarcotics, education, health, and infrastructure projects. China urged the United States to take into consideration China's "core interests" in Xinjiang and Tibet and to support China's efforts to combat the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

China Willing to Continue Coordinating with U.S.

¶2. (C) China would like to see the United States continue to play a "constructive" role in promoting stability in South Asia, MFA Department of Asian Affairs Deputy Director General Sun Weidong told DAS Shear in a December 10 meeting. Citing our shared interests in stability and peace in South Asia, Sun said that China was willing to continue coordinating with the United States. Sun noted the positive November 11 consultations with Deputy SRAP Feldman and President Obama and President Hu's exchange of views on South Asia during Obama's successful visit to China.

Questions about New U.S. Strategy

¶3. (C) Noting appreciation for receiving a preview of President Obama's announcement on Afghanistan and Pakistan and commenting that China had "carefully read" the speech, Sun expressed interest in learning more about three aspects of the new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan: 1) how the United States would assess the effectiveness of the troop surge; 2) whether the U.S. goal was to eliminate the insurgents or simply prevent their coming to power; and 3) how the United States would distinguish between radical Taliban insurgents and more moderate Taliban followers who would be willing to go back to legitimate political participation. DAS Shear responded that the new U.S. strategy would improve security in Afghanistan, strengthen Afghanistan's capacity to promote stability and economic development, and lure many insurgents away from the Taliban. He stressed that U.S. efforts to eliminate the Al-Qaeda threat, mitigate the Taliban threat and increase the Afghan government's capacity would serve both Afghanistan and China's interests.

Areas of Possible U.S.-PRC Cooperation

14. (C) DAS Shear suggested the United States and China agree to an Af/Pak action plan and outlined a number of areas of possible U.S.-PRC cooperation, including counternarcotics, education, health, agriculture, infrastructure projects and energy projects. He noted that the Secretary's Coordinator for International Energy Affairs David Goldwyn may visit Beijing in March, which would present a useful opportunity for an exchange with Chinese energy experts on energy projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He suggested that the United States and China continue working-level Af/Pak consultations and hold the South and Central Asia (SCA) Sub-Dialogue before the second round of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue is held in the summer of 2010.

15. (C) Sun responded that the United States and China shared an interest in peace in Afghanistan and stability and development in Pakistan. The United States and China each had its own channels for bilateral assistance, and China, as a developing country, would offer assistance "within its capacities." He noted that there was room to strengthen U.S.-PRC cooperation and stressed that such cooperation must serve not only U.S. and Chinese interests but those of Afghanistan and Pakistan as well. Regarding cooperation on agriculture, Sun expressed willingness to study concrete U.S. proposals and share them with relevant agencies. Noting the positive cooperation between DEA and the Chinese Public Security Bureau (PSB), Sun asked for more detailed proposals regarding counternarcotics cooperation. He also welcomed more detailed U.S. proposals on education, health and infrastructure projects. Sun said China looked forward to Assistant Secretary Blake's possible visit to Beijing in early 2010 for the SCA Sub-Dialogue and expressed interest in

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learning more about U.S. views on the January 2010 London conference on Afghanistan and possible conference in Kabul.

China Stresses Importance of Xinjiang and Tibet

16. (C) Sun expressed hope that efforts to strengthen U.S.-PRC coordination in South Asia would take into consideration China's "core interests" in Xinjiang and Tibet. Noting China's significant security and economic interests in South Asia, Sun said that ETIM posed a major threat to China's security and urged U.S. support for combating ETIM.
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